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TIME INCORPORATED

Kup's Show WBKB-TV

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TIME SUES AUTHOR OF SIX SECONDS IN DALLAS

JOSIAH THOMPSON: ...when we turn to this photographic evidence, it seems to me that the theory (one bullet having hit both Kennedy and Connelly) is both finally and utterly demolished.

And this was one of the most exicting parts of my own study - was the opportunity to see at Life, when I worked for Life as a special consultant on this, their superior copy of the Zarpruder film. I studied the Commission's Copy of the film in the National Archives in the summer 1966. It was rather unclear and I frankly could not determine the exact point when the Governor had been hit. I went to work for Life and immediately, with the naked eye, it was obvious that the Governor was hit about - Zarpruder Frame 238 - about a second after the President had been hit. Which was an amazing revelation to me. Suddenly in this one frame, one could see the Governor's shoulder buckle, his cheeks puff, and things of this sort.

I thought that LIfe was going to break the case open, and I called up my editor, that's Bernard Gars (?) Associates. I said, "We can forget about the book, the case is broken, the evidence is disclosed, the single bullet theory is available here at Life. I presume that within the month the case will be open. Forget about the book."

Well, Life didn't break the case, and over the next 9 or 10 months we worked and worked and worked; tried to get this film for use in the book. We finally offered to turn the book over to Time INcorporated - to give up all commercial interest in the book to Time Incorporated and publish the book at cost. They refused. We brought out the book. Since the publication of the book, I've been urging that these critical things be released and finally three weeks ago Time Incorporated sues me. They're enjoining distribution of the book seeking to - that all copies of the book be impounded and destroyed.

KUP: Why?

THOMPSON: They claim that the sketches that are used in this book - we were unable to use photographs - the sketches in this book, infringe their copyright on the film. I had some copies...

KUP: Did they say you stole something from them, if I remember...

THOMPSON: Oh yes, my friends tell me that I'm only lucky that they didn't charge me with stealing paper clips too because in suits of this sort that's quite usual. Yes, they charged me with stealing, surreptitiously, a copy of the Zapruder Film.

KUPE: Well, the frames that show, in your contention, the demolishment of the single bullet theory with Connelly's shoulder bucking and cheeks puffing out and so forth, weren't those frames available to the Warren Commission? Didn't they have a copy of the Zapruder Film?

THOMPSON: Well, this is the critical thing. You see, the copy of the Zapruder film available to the Warren Commission was very unclear. I studied it myself in the summer of 1967 and couldn't determine when the Governor was hit.

JAMES THOMPSON (N.Y.U. School of Law): That doesn't show Connelly's reaction as vividly as you describe them.

THOMPSON: No. And I learned why. Because it turns out to be a copy of a copy. A second generation copy. It's an amazing thing that the Warren Commission would not avail itself of the best evidence because its right there at Life.

RALPH SCHOLLMAN (?)(SPOKE TO BERTRAND RUSSELL): I don't understand one thing here. Why, I mean certainly the behaviour of LIfe magazine is shabby but why should that be a surprise to anybody. I mean these are the people who published a fake picture on their cover, superimposing Oswald's head on someone else's body, painting a pistol into his belt and a rifle into his hand. Why should it be any surprise about the behavior of them now in relation to the Zapruder Film?

And how much more the Warren Commission which is a total fraud. I mean, that report from the first to the last page - disparity between every piece of relavent testimony...

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JAMES THOMPSON: Dr. Sparrow of London a very recognized authority issued a report the other day in which he agreed with the Warren Commission...

Mr. Thompson how do you feel about his comments?

THOMPSON: Well, I haven't read his 18,000 word piece in the TLS, I haven't been able to get ahold of it. I did read some of his comments quoted in Time magazine that were taken out of that piece and they struck me as incredibly fatuous.

ONe comment he made was that, surely it would be impossible for 2 or 3 gun ment to synchronize their fire so accurately...

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MICHAEL AYERTON (Author): What would be the point of Life's suppression of the evidence. Why don't we ask the question. Weve been 'round it. Why would they want to do it?

THOMPSON: I don't know. I take a rather non-sinister and non-conspiratorial view of the situation, right now. Ralph would disagree with me I suppose. But having for that gigantic organization and having known how decisions get made or not made there, I think it may simply be an example of executive bumbling at the highest level of Time Incorporated.

The difficulty is that Time Incorporated has seen this film as a commercial asset from the very beginning.

AYERTON: Which is not using, as it transpires/

THOMPSON: Pardon.

AYERTON: Which its not using, as it transpires, commercially.

THOMPSON: Well, it has published a film on, I think on 3 occassions.

AYERTON: Would it stand to make more or less money out of it by publishing it in full or suppressing parts of it.

THOMPSON: I should think that Time Incorporated could publish a best seller right now, by simply publishing the frames from the Zapruder Film and I think that book would sell a million copies.

AYERTON: But they notably haven't done so.

THOMPSON: They haven't done so, that's correct. And when I appealed to them to release just 4 of these frames which show the impact of the bullet on the Governor which explodes the single bullet theory, they answered my appeal by bringing suit against me by trying to suppress my book and that's a very maddening thing to have happen.

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KUP: Let me askyou an obvious question, Josiah. You make a very strong point about Life not pursuing evidence that you thought was very damaging. Yet Life has come out editorially for a renewed hearing of (WORD UNCLEAR) as has the New York Times. There seems to be agrowing body of -- I'm sure that your book will add to this growing talk that there should be more investigation, and perhaps a reconvening of the Warren Commission. YOu feel a reconvening will be the answer or do you think a new Committee should be appointed, an entirely new investigation started. Perhaps headed by Ralph Sholleman.

THOMPSON: Certainly not headed by the people who suppressed the evidence in the first place.

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THOMPSON: I'm really rather amazed. My own personal life has gotten progressively uglier since the publication of this book. I find it really amazing to publish a book which attempts to be a job of contemporary history to reconstruct the assassination in as rigorous and documented a way as I can and find that within 3 weeks of publication of that document that I'm ensnarled in a law suit with Time Incorporated...

KUP: The law suit seems to bug you more than anything else...

THOMPSON: Well, they're trying to suppress the book they're trying to make it impossible for people to read it.

KUP: You're getting a tremendous play on what you've written as the results of your study that may cast a whole new aspect to this assassination. That I think is the very thing in your mind.

THOMPSON: I would be very glad to put this assassination in the past. I think everyone that I've talked to feels much the same way, but its quite clear that it can't be put in the past in its present condition...